basis of Combined Civil Services Examinations during last few years is given below :—

1996	—	80
1997	—	76
1998	—	55
1999	—	55
2000	—	56

(b) The number of IAS officers who retired during the period from 1996 to 2000 is given below :—

1996	—	233
1997	—	222
1998	—	85
1999	—	25
2000	—	148

(c) During the last two years, no retired IAS officer has been re-appointed in the administrative services. However, one IAS officer had been appointed on contract basis in the rank and pay of Secretary to the Government of India w.e.f. 1-2-2001 after his retirement from Government Service.

Introducing the Freedom of Information Bill

4239. SHRI RAJIV RANJAN SINGH 'LALAN' :
SHRI KAPIL SIBAL :

Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state :

(a) whether Government have by now finalized and approved long-awaited Freedom of Information Bill;

(b) if so, the objectives thereof particularly with regard to covering inconsistencies and contradictions in the existing Official Secrets Acts;

(c) whether the proposed Bill is likely to bring under its purview anti-insurgency operations and intelligence activities of CRPF, BSF and ITBP which have been at the centre of criticism in national and international press in recent years;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) by when the Bill is likely to be introduced in Parliament?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF PERSONNEL AND TRAINING OF THE MINISTRY OF PERSONNEL, PUBLIC GRIEVANCES AND PENSIONS (SHRIMATI VASUNDHARA RAJE) : (a), (b) and (e) In order to make the Government more transparent and accountable to the public, a Bill to enact the 'Freedom of Information Act' was introduced by the Government in the Lok Sabha on 25th July, 2000. The Bill provides that the provisions of the Official Secrets Act, 1923, and every other Act in force shall cease to be operative to the extent to which they are inconsistent with the provisions of the proposed Act.

(c) and (d) The Freedom of Information Bill, 2000, as introduced and pending in the Lok Sabha, was referred to the Department-related Parliamentary Standing Committee on Home Affairs for examination. The Committee has since presented its report to both the Houses of Parliament on 25th July, 2001. In this Report, the Committee has expressed the opinion that anti-insurgency operations and intelligence activities of CRPF, BSF and ITBP should also be brought under the purview of information exempted from disclosure under the proposed Act.

Status of Council for Clean India

4240. SHRI RAJEEV SHUKLA : Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Council for Clean India formed by Central Vigilance Commission of India has the approval of Government;

(b) what is the constitution of the Council and its powers and responsibilities; and

(c) whether it is a quasi-judicial authority or otherwise?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF PERSONNEL AND TRAINING OF THE MINISTRY OF PERSONNEL, PUBLIC GRIEVANCES AND PENSIONS (SHRIMATI VASUNDHARA RAJE) : (a) to (c) As per the information furnished by the Central Vigilance Commission (CVC) , it has set up a virtual organization, named as, Council for a Clean India (CFCI). The Commission have no intention of making it into a registered or a corporate body. Instead, in the website of the CVC, the names of all the participants of CFCI would be included. The Government, however, has not received any formal proposal from the Commission in this regard.